

Senate Bill 178

By: Senators Moody of the 56th, Hill of the 4th and Weber of the 40th

**AS PASSED**

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, so as  
2 to provide for enrollment counts for students in certain dual enrollment programs; to provide  
3 for requirements for weighting of students in certain dual enrollment courses under the  
4 Quality Basic Education Formula; to temporarily waive certain expenditure controls relating  
5 to funds earned for direct instructional costs, media center costs, staff and professional  
6 development costs, and additional days of instruction; to provide for automatic repeal; to  
7 embed and extend a sunset date of June 30, 2011, for provisions relating to advance funding,  
8 exceptional growth, and low-wealth capital outlay grants; to amend an Act approved May  
9 6, 2008 (Ga. L. 2008, p. 288), an Act approved April 9, 2001 (Ga. L. 2001, p. 148), and an  
10 Act approved April 22, 1999 (Ga. L. 1999, p. 400), relating to the automatic repeal of  
11 provisions relating to advance funding, exceptional growth, and low-wealth capital outlay  
12 grants; to enact the "Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act"  
13 to develop programs to improve graduation rates and to improve the preparedness of students  
14 for postsecondary education and careers; to provide for definitions; to provide for the  
15 development of focused programs of study; to provide for model programs for students at  
16 risk of dropping out of high school; to train school counselors and graduation coaches to  
17 provide for educational counseling and career awareness programs for students; to establish  
18 a reform grant program; to require local school systems which receive a reform grant to  
19 comply with certain requirements; to provide for high school completion rate goals in the  
20 state accountability system; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for legislative  
21 intent; to provide for exemptions from certain portions of the high school graduation test and  
22 end-of-course assessments; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date;  
23 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

25 **SECTION 1.**

26 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended by  
 27 revising subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-160, relating to determination of enrollment by  
 28 institutional program, as follows:

29 "(a) The State Board of Education shall designate the specific dates upon which two counts  
 30 of students enrolled in each instructional program authorized under this article shall be  
 31 made each school year and by which the counts shall be reported to the Department of  
 32 Education. The initial enrollment count shall be made after October 1 but prior to  
 33 November 17 and the final enrollment count after March 1 but prior to May 1. The report  
 34 shall indicate the student's specific assigned program for each one-sixth segment of the  
 35 school day on the designated reporting date. No program shall be indicated for a student  
 36 for any one-sixth segment of the school day that the student is assigned to a study hall; a  
 37 noncredit course; a course recognized under this article or by state board policy as an  
 38 enrichment course, except a driver education course; a course which requires participation  
 39 in an extracurricular activity for which enrollment is on a competitive basis; a course in  
 40 which the student serves as a student assistant to a teacher, in a school office, or in the  
 41 media center, except when such placement is an approved work site of a recognized career  
 42 or vocational program; an individual study course for which no outline of course objectives  
 43 is prepared in writing prior to the beginning of the course; a course taken through the  
 44 Georgia Virtual School pursuant to Code Section 20-2-319.1; or any other course or  
 45 activity so designated by the state board. For the purpose of this Code section, the term  
 46 'enrichment course' means a course which does not dedicate a major portion of the class  
 47 time toward the development and enhancement of one or more student competencies as  
 48 adopted by the state board under Code Section 20-2-140. A program shall not be indicated  
 49 for a student for any one-sixth segment of the school day for which the student is not  
 50 enrolled in an instructional program or has not attended a class or classes within the  
 51 preceding ten days; nor shall a program be indicated for a student for any one-sixth  
 52 segment of the school day for which the student is charged tuition or fees or is required to  
 53 provide materials or equipment beyond those authorized pursuant to Code Section  
 54 20-2-133. A student who is enrolled in an eligible institution under the program  
 55 established in Code Section 20-2-161.1 may be counted for the high school program for  
 56 only that portion of the day that the student is attending the high school for those segments  
 57 that are eligible to be counted under this subsection. A student who is enrolled in a dual  
 58 enrollment program other than as established in Code Section 20-2-161.1 shall be counted  
 59 for the high school program or other appropriate program for each segment in which the

60 student is attending the high school or attending a postsecondary course conducted at the  
 61 high school, as long as the dual enrollment program is provided (1) at a charter school or  
 62 (2) at a high school pursuant to an agreement between the local school system and a  
 63 postsecondary institution if such agreement provides for cost sharing and has been  
 64 approved by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall establish,  
 65 no later than September 1, 2009, a funding code to enable such count which shall be no  
 66 less than 50 percent of the program weight for the appropriate instructional program for  
 67 such student as established pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161. The state board shall adopt  
 68 such regulations and criteria as necessary to ensure objective and true counts of students  
 69 in state approved instructional programs. The state board shall also establish criteria by  
 70 which students shall be counted as resident or nonresident students, including specific  
 71 circumstances which may include, but not be limited to, students attending another local  
 72 school system under court order or under the terms of a contract between two local school  
 73 systems. If a local school system has a justifiable reason, it may seek authority from the  
 74 state board to shift full-time equivalent program counts from the designated date to a  
 75 requested alternate date."

76 **SECTION 2.**

77 Said title is further amended in Code Section 20-2-161, relating to the Quality Basic  
 78 Education Formula, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

79 "(c.1) For purposes of calculating the annual allotment of funds to each local school  
 80 system, a student who is enrolled in a dual enrollment program other than as established  
 81 in Code Section 20-2-161.1 shall be counted for the high school program or other  
 82 appropriate program for each segment in which the student is attending the high school  
 83 or attending a postsecondary course conducted at the high school, as long as the dual  
 84 enrollment program is provided (1) at a charter school or (2) at a high school pursuant to  
 85 an agreement between the local school system and a postsecondary institution if such  
 86 agreement provides for cost sharing and has been approved by the State Board of  
 87 Education. The State Board of Education and the Governor's Office of Planning and  
 88 Budget shall establish, no later than September 1, 2009, a funding code to enable such  
 89 count which shall be no less than 50 percent of the program weight for the appropriate  
 90 instructional program for such student as established pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161."

91 **SECTION 3.**

92 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (h) of Code Section 20-2-260, relating  
 93 to capital outlay funds generally, as follows:

94 "(h) A local school system may receive state capital outlay funds for one construction  
 95 project under the advance funding category to meet educational facilities needs due to the  
 96 following:

- 97 (1) Extraordinary growth of student population in excess of the capacity of existing  
 98 facilities;
- 99 (2) Destruction of or damage to educational facilities by fire or natural disaster, limited  
 100 by the provisions of paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of this Code section;
- 101 (3) Replacement of educational facilities which have been certified as hazards to health  
 102 or safety;
- 103 (4) Projects, in priority order, which would otherwise require more than three years of  
 104 the combined annual entitlement and required local participation amounts, estimated in  
 105 accordance with the total entitlement intended for authorization by the State Board of  
 106 Education; and
- 107 (5) Projects for consolidation of schools across local school system lines which have  
 108 costs that exceed the combined annual entitlements of the participating local school  
 109 systems. Such projects shall meet, with the exception of paragraph (2) of this subsection,  
 110 the following conditions to qualify for advanced funding:

111 (A) The local school systems have specifically requested funding under this subsection  
 112 prior to submission of the annual budget request for the state board to the General  
 113 Assembly;

114 (B) Annual entitlements accrued under subsection (g) of this Code section have offset  
 115 any advanced funding previously granted, except that no more than three years of  
 116 combined entitlements of the participating local school systems shall be required to  
 117 offset advance funding for consolidation projects pursuant to paragraph (5) of  
 118 subsection (e) of this Code section;

119 (C) The projects to be funded are not in addition to projects funded for local school  
 120 systems under the provisions of subsection (g) of this Code section in a given year; and

121 (D) The required local participation and all other procedural requirements of this Code  
 122 section are met.

123 This subsection shall be automatically repealed on June 30, 2011."

124 **SECTION 4.**

125 Said title is further amended in Code Section 20-2-260, relating to capital outlay funds  
 126 generally, by adding a new paragraph to subsection (j) to read as follows:

127 "(7) This subsection shall be automatically repealed on June 30, 2011."

128 **SECTION 5.**

129 Said title is further amended in Code Section 20-2-262, relating to low-wealth capital outlay  
 130 grants to local school systems, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

131 "(e) This Code section shall be automatically repealed on June 30, 2011."

132 **SECTION 6.**

133 (1) An Act approved May 6, 2008 (Ga. L. 2008, p. 288), is amended by repealing Section  
 134 1 of such Act in its entirety.

135 (2) An Act approved April 9, 2001 (Ga. L. 2001, p. 148), is amended by repealing Section  
 136 21 of such Act in its entirety.

137 **SECTION 7.**

138 (1) An Act approved May 6, 2008 (Ga. L. 2008, p. 288), is amended by repealing Section  
 139 2 of such Act in its entirety.

140 (2) An Act approved April 9, 2001 (Ga. L. 2001, p. 148), is amended by repealing Section  
 141 23 of such Act in its entirety.

142 (3) An Act approved April 22, 1999 (Ga. L. 1999, p. 400), is amended by striking in its  
 143 entirety Section 2 and inserting in lieu thereof a new Section 2 to read as follows:

144 "SECTION 2.

145 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
 146 without such approval ~~and shall be automatically repealed on June 30, 2002."~~

147 **SECTION 8.**

148 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended by  
 149 revising Code Section 20-2-167, relating to funding for direct instructional, media center, and  
 150 staff development costs, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

151 "(f)(1) For school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 only, the expenditure controls  
 152 contained in subsection (a) of this Code section relating to direct instructional costs,  
 153 media center costs, and staff and professional development costs shall be waived and  
 154 shall not apply to nor be enforceable against a local school system.

155 (2) Each local school system shall report to the Department of Education its budgets and  
 156 expenditures of the funds received pursuant to this Code section as a part of its report in  
 157 October for the FTE count and on March 15.

158 (3) No penalty shall be applied to a local school system for failure to comply with  
 159 expenditure controls set out in subsection (a) of this Code section that are contrary to this

160 subsection, notwithstanding any law to the contrary, as long as such local school system  
 161 complies with this subsection.

162 (4) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to repeal any other provision of this  
 163 Code section or this chapter.

164 (5) This subsection shall be automatically repealed on July 1, 2010."

165 **SECTION 9.**

166 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-184.1, relating to funding for  
 167 additional days of instruction, as follows:

168 "20-2-184.1.

169 (a) The program weights for the kindergarten, kindergarten early intervention, primary,  
 170 primary grades early intervention, upper elementary, upper elementary grades early  
 171 intervention, middle grades, middle school, and remedial programs and the program  
 172 weights for the high school programs authorized pursuant to paragraph (4) of subsection (b)  
 173 of Code Section 20-2-151, when multiplied by the base amount, shall reflect sufficient  
 174 funds to pay the beginning salaries for instructors needed to provide 20 additional days of  
 175 instruction for 10 percent of the full-time equivalent count of the respective program. Such  
 176 funds shall be used for addressing the academic needs of low-performing students with  
 177 programs including, but not limited to, instructional opportunities for students beyond the  
 178 regular school day, Saturday classes, intersession classes, and summer school classes.  
 179 Following the midterm adjustment, the state board shall issue allotment sheets for each  
 180 local school system. Each local school system shall spend 100 percent of the funds  
 181 designated for additional days of instruction for such costs at the system level. Up to 15  
 182 percent of funds designated for additional days of instruction may be spent for  
 183 transportation costs incurred for transporting students who are attending the additional  
 184 classes funded by these designated funds.

185 (b)(1) For school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 only, the expenditure controls  
 186 contained in subsection (a) of this Code section relating to additional days of instruction  
 187 shall be waived and shall not apply to nor be enforceable against a local school system.

188 (2) Each local school system shall report to the Department of Education its budgets and  
 189 expenditures of the funds received pursuant to this Code section as a part of its report in  
 190 October for the FTE count and on March 15.

191 (3) No penalty shall be applied to a local school system for failure to comply with  
 192 expenditure controls set out in subsection (a) of this Code section that are contrary to this  
 193 subsection, notwithstanding any law to the contrary, as long as such local school system  
 194 complies with this subsection.

- 195 (4) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to repeal any other provision of this  
 196 Code section or this chapter.  
 197 (5) This subsection shall be automatically repealed on July 1, 2010."

198 **SECTION 10.**

199 Said title is further amended by adding a new part to read as follows:

200 "Part 16

201 20-2-325.

202 This part shall be known and may be cited as the 'Building Resourceful Individuals to  
 203 Develop Georgia's Economy Act.'

204 20-2-326.

205 For purposes of this part, the term:

206 (1) 'Articulation' means agreement between a high school and a postsecondary institution  
 207 regarding the awarding of both secondary and postsecondary credit for a dual enrollment  
 208 course.

209 (2) 'Career academy' means a specialized charter school established by a partnership  
 210 between one or more local boards of education and a technical school or college and  
 211 approved by the State Board of Education in accordance with Article 31 of this chapter  
 212 or the Georgia Charter Schools Commission in accordance with Article 31A of this  
 213 chapter. This term also includes a small learning community where a student receives  
 214 academic instruction at his or her assigned high school combined with work based  
 215 learning opportunities at an industry center or technical school or college.

216 (3) 'Choice technical high school' means a high school, other than the high school to  
 217 which a student is assigned by virtue of his or her residence and attendance zone, which  
 218 is designed to prepare a high school student for postsecondary education and for  
 219 employment in a career field. A choice technical high school may be operated by a local  
 220 school system or a technical school or college. A choice technical high school may also  
 221 be operated as a charter school under a governance board composed of parents,  
 222 employers, and representatives from the local board of education.

223 (4) 'Chronically low-performing high school' means a public high school in this state  
 224 with a graduation rate less than 60 percent for three consecutive years, as determined in  
 225 accordance with methodology established by the National Governors Association's  
 226 Compact on High School Graduation Data or that has not made adequate yearly progress  
 227 for three consecutive years, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement.

228 (5) 'Focused program of study' means a rigorous academic core combined with either a  
229 focus in mathematics and science; a focus in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language;  
230 or a coherent sequence of career pathway courses that is aligned with graduation  
231 requirements established by the State Board of Education and curriculum requirements  
232 established pursuant to Part 2 of this article, that prepares a student for postsecondary  
233 education or immediate employment after high school graduation, and that is in  
234 accordance with the requirements of paragraph (1) of Code Section 20-2-328.

235 (6) 'Graduation plan' means a student specific plan developed in accordance with  
236 paragraph (7) of subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-327 detailing the courses necessary  
237 for a high school student to graduate from high school and to successfully transition to  
238 postsecondary education and the work force.

239 (7) 'Industry certification' means a process of program evaluation that ensures that  
240 individual programs meet industry standards in the areas of curriculum, teacher  
241 qualification, lab specifications, equipment, and industry involvement.

242 (8) 'Public college or university' means a two-year or four-year college, university, or  
243 other institution under the auspices of the Board of Regents of the University System of  
244 Georgia.

245 (9) 'Small learning community' means an autonomous or semiautonomous small learning  
246 environment within a large high school which is made up of a subset of students and  
247 teachers for a two, three, or four-year period. The goal of a small learning community  
248 is to achieve greater personalization of learning with each community led by a principal  
249 or instructional leader. A small learning community blends academic studies around a  
250 broad career or academic theme where teachers have common planning time to connect  
251 teacher assignments and assessments to college and career readiness standards. Students  
252 voluntarily apply for enrollment in a small learning community but must be accepted and  
253 such enrollment must be approved by the student's parent or guardian. A small learning  
254 community also includes a career academy organized around a specific career theme  
255 which integrates academic and career instruction, provides work-based learning  
256 opportunities, and prepares students for postsecondary education and employment, with  
257 support through partnerships with local employers, community organizations, and  
258 postsecondary institutions.

259 (10) 'Technical school or college' means a school, college, institution, or other branch of  
260 the Technical College System of Georgia.

261 20-2-327.

262 (a)(1) The Department of Education shall develop focused programs of study in high  
263 demand, high skill, and high wage academic and career fields in accordance with a  
264 phase-in schedule as determined by the state board.

265 (2) Focused programs of study may include, but are not limited to:

266 (A) Aerospace;

267 (B) Health care and elderly care;

268 (C) Agribusiness;

269 (D) Life science;

270 (E) Energy and environmental;

271 (F) Logistics and transportation;

272 (G) Information and technology;

273 (H) Teacher education training;

274 (I) Technology and engineering;

275 (J) Science and mathematics; and

276 (K) Humanities and fine arts.

277 (3) The department shall include in the focused programs of study the flexibility for a  
278 student to pursue courses at the school of attendance, at a technical school or college, at  
279 a public college or university, at a work site under an apprenticeship cooperative  
280 education program, and at other settings approved by the State Board of Education, as  
281 appropriate.

282 (4) For each focused program of study identified pursuant to this subsection, the  
283 department shall convene a committee which includes high school teachers; school  
284 counselors; representatives from the Board of Regents of the University System of  
285 Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Governor's Office of Workforce  
286 Development, and employers; and others as deemed appropriate by the department.  
287 These committees shall develop and recommend a focused program of study which  
288 blends academic and technical content developed around college and career readiness  
289 standards with real world problems and projects for students. Recommendations shall  
290 include state-wide articulation and dual enrollment courses between local school systems  
291 and postsecondary institutions to provide seamless pathways for adequately prepared high  
292 school students to move directly into postsecondary education. The committees shall  
293 develop measures to certify equivalency in content and rigor for all state-wide articulation  
294 and dual enrollment courses and shall follow related policies and procedures established  
295 by the Department of Education, the Board of Regents of the University System of  
296 Georgia, and the State Board of Technical and Adult Education for awarding articulation

297 and dual enrollment credit which shall be based on students qualifying to enroll in credit  
298 bearing postsecondary courses.

299 (5) Student performance at the advanced proficiency/honors level on any assessments  
300 required for purposes of high school graduation shall be recognized as: (1) meeting  
301 postsecondary entrance test requirements, and (2) qualifying students to enroll in  
302 credit-bearing postsecondary course work in accordance with policies and requirements  
303 established by the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents of the University  
304 System of Georgia, and the State Board of Technical and Adult Education.

305 (6) Secondary and postsecondary credit shall be awarded immediately upon successful  
306 completion of any articulated or dual enrollment course in accordance with policies and  
307 requirements established by the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents of the  
308 University System of Georgia, and the State Board of Technical and Adult Education.

309 (7) Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth  
310 grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest  
311 inventories, and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career  
312 interests. Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students shall select  
313 a preferred focused program of study and develop an individual graduation plan in  
314 consultation with their parents, guardians, or individuals appointed by the parents or  
315 guardians to serve as their designee. High school students shall be provided guidance,  
316 advisement, and counseling annually that will enable them to successfully complete their  
317 individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to postsecondary  
318 study, further training, or employment. An individual graduation plan shall:

319 (A) Include rigorous academic core subjects and focused course work in mathematics  
320 and science or in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language or sequenced career  
321 pathway course work;

322 (B) Incorporate provisions of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP),  
323 where applicable;

324 (C) Align educational and broad career goals and a student's course of study;

325 (D) Be based on the student's selected academic and career focus area as approved by  
326 the student's parent or guardian;

327 (E) Include experience based, career oriented learning experiences which may include,  
328 but not be limited to, internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, co-op education, and  
329 service learning;

330 (F) Include opportunities for postsecondary studies through articulation, dual  
331 enrollment, and joint enrollment;

332 (G) Be flexible to allow change in the course of study but be sufficiently structured to  
333 meet graduation requirements and qualify the student for admission to postsecondary  
334 education; and

335 (H) Be approved by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance  
336 from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

337 (8) The Department of Education shall provide training for school counselors and  
338 graduation coaches about high demand, high skill, and high wage opportunities for  
339 bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, and certificates, how a combination of rigorous  
340 academic and technical courses can prepare students for these fields, and how to organize  
341 a teacher adviser system that engages teachers in working with a core group of students  
342 and their parents or guardians in setting goals, identifying individual programs of study,  
343 and establishing individual graduation plans to achieve those goals. The plan shall  
344 include strategies for school counselors, graduation coaches, and teacher advisers to  
345 effectively involve parents or guardians in the educational and career guidance process  
346 and in the development of individual graduation plans. Upon request by any local school  
347 system, training may be given to school counselors and graduation coaches in any middle  
348 or high school.

349 (9) No later than July 1, 2011, the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the  
350 Technical College System of Georgia and the Board of Regents of the University System  
351 of Georgia, shall establish a process for certifying all focused programs of study receiving  
352 state funds by using national certifying agencies where they exist and developing state  
353 industry-certifying panels in career pathways where no national certifying agency exists.  
354 The certification process shall, at a minimum, validate that a program of study curriculum  
355 meets industry standards where applicable, that its teachers hold current industry  
356 certification where applicable, and that its facilities, equipment, and software are  
357 adequate to teach the curriculum.

358 (b)(1) The State Board of Education shall develop an evidence based model program for  
359 chronically low-performing high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant to  
360 subsection (d) of this Code section for addressing at-risk students, which shall include  
361 various programs and curricula proven to be effective for at-risk students focusing on:

362 (A) Identification of students at risk for being poorly prepared for the next grade level  
363 or for dropping out of school;

364 (B) Strengthening retention of ninth grade students in school and reducing high failure  
365 rates;

366 (C) Improving more student performance to grade level standards in reading and  
367 mathematics by the end of ninth grade;

368 (D) Assisting students and their parents or guardians in setting an outcome career and  
369 educational goal and identifying a focused program of study to achieve such goal; and  
370 (E) Assisting students in learning and applying study skills, coping skills, and other  
371 habits that produce successful students and adults.

372 (2) The at-risk model program shall include:

373 (A) Diagnostic assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in the core academic  
374 areas;

375 (B) A process for identifying these students, closely monitored by the Department of  
376 Education in collaboration with local school systems to ensure that students are being  
377 properly identified and provided timely, appropriate guidance and assistance and to  
378 ensure that no group is disproportionately represented; and

379 (C) An evaluation component in each high school to ensure the programs are providing  
380 students an opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma.

381 (3) The at-risk model program may include various components designed to result in  
382 more students facilitating a successful start in high school and passing ninth grade such  
383 as:

384 (A) Utilizing a flexible schedule that increases students' time in core language  
385 arts/reading and mathematics studies designed to eliminate academic deficiencies;

386 (B) Maintaining a student-teacher ratio in ninth grade that is no higher than any other  
387 grade level ratio in high school;

388 (C) Utilizing experienced and effective teachers as leaders for teacher teams in ninth  
389 grade to improve instructional planning, delivery, and re-teaching strategies;

390 (D) Assigning students to a teacher mentor who will meet with them frequently to  
391 provide planned lessons on study skills and other habits of success that help students  
392 become independent learners and who will help them receive the assistance they need  
393 to successfully pass ninth grade; and

394 (E) Including ninth grade career courses which incorporate a series of miniprojects  
395 throughout the school year that require the application of ninth grade level reading,  
396 mathematics, and science skills to complete while students learn to use a range of  
397 technology and help students explore a range of educational and career options that will  
398 assist them in formulating post high school goals and give them a reason to stay in  
399 school and work toward achieving their stated goals.

400 (c) No later than July 1, 2010, the State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and  
401 regulations for chronically low-performing high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant  
402 to subsection (d) of this Code section to make the high schools more relevant to and  
403 effective for all students. Such rules shall encourage high schools to implement a  
404 comprehensive school reform research based model that focuses on:

- 405 (1) Setting high expectations for all students;  
 406 (2) Personalizing graduation plans for students;  
 407 (3) Developing small learning communities or career academies with a rigorous  
 408 academic foundation and emphasis in broad career fields of study;  
 409 (4) Using project based instruction embedded with strong academics to improve  
 410 relevancy in learning;  
 411 (5) Fostering collaboration among academic and career/technical teachers;  
 412 (6) Implementing nontraditional scheduling in ninth grade for students behind in their  
 413 grade level;  
 414 (7) Promoting parental involvement; and  
 415 (8) Training teachers to work with low-performing students and their parents or  
 416 guardians.
- 417 (d) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education shall  
 418 establish a competitive grant program for local school systems to implement school reform  
 419 measures in selected high schools pursuant to this part. The state board shall establish  
 420 program requirements in accordance with the provisions of this part and shall establish  
 421 grant criteria, which shall include that priority for reform grants shall be given to  
 422 chronically low-performing high schools.

423 20-2-328.

424 High schools that receive a reform grant pursuant to subsection (d) of Code Section  
 425 20-2-327 shall:

- 426 (1) Provide focused programs of study which are designed to provide a well-rounded  
 427 education for students by fostering artistic creativity, critical thinking, and self-discipline  
 428 through the teaching of academic content, knowledge, and skills that students will use in  
 429 the workplace, further education, and life. The focused programs of study, whether  
 430 provided at a choice technical high school, a career academy, a traditional high school,  
 431 or on site at a technical school or college or a public college or university, shall be  
 432 aligned with graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education and  
 433 curriculum requirements established pursuant to Part 2 of this article, which shall include,  
 434 at a minimum, four years of mathematics, Algebra I and higher, and four years of  
 435 English, with an emphasis on developing reading and writing skills to meet college and  
 436 career readiness standards;
- 437 (2) Implement a teacher adviser system where an individual professional educator in the  
 438 school assists a small group of students and their parents or guardians throughout the  
 439 students' high school careers to set postsecondary goals and help them prepare programs  
 440 of study, utilizing assessments and other data to track academic progress on a regular

441 basis; communicates frequently with parents or guardians; and provides advisement,  
 442 support, and encouragement as needed;

443 (3) Provide students in the ninth through twelfth grades information on educational  
 444 programs offered in high school, in technical and community colleges, in colleges and  
 445 universities, and through apprenticeship programs and how these programs can lead to  
 446 a variety of career fields. Local school systems shall provide opportunities for field trips,  
 447 speakers, educational and career information centers, job shadowing, and classroom  
 448 centers to assist students and their parents or guardians, with guidance from school  
 449 counselors and teacher advisers, in revising, if appropriate, the individual graduation plan  
 450 developed pursuant to paragraph (7) of subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-327;

451 (4) Enroll students no later than ninth grade into one of the following options for earning  
 452 a high school diploma and preparing students for postsecondary education and a career  
 453 which will include a structured program of academic study with in-depth studies in:

454 (A) Mathematics and science;

455 (B) Humanities, fine arts, and foreign language; or

456 (C) A career pathway that leads to passing an employer certification exam in a high  
 457 demand, high skill, or high wage career field or to an associate's degree or bachelor's  
 458 degree.

459 The awarding of a special education diploma to any disabled student who has not  
 460 completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma, but who has completed his  
 461 or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) shall be deemed to meet the requirements  
 462 of this paragraph;

463 (5) Implement the at-risk model program developed by the State Board of Education  
 464 pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-327;

465 (6) Comply with the rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education  
 466 for chronically low-performing high schools pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section  
 467 20-2-327; and

468 (7) Schedule annual conferences to assist parents or guardians and their children in  
 469 setting educational and career goals and creating individual graduation plans beginning  
 470 with students in the eighth grade and continuing through high school. These conferences  
 471 shall include, but are not limited to, assisting the student in identifying educational and  
 472 career interests and goals, selecting a career and academic focus area, and developing an  
 473 individual graduation plan.

474 20-2-329.

475 No later than July 1, 2010, the Office of Student Achievement shall include in the  
 476 accountability system provided for in Part 3 of Article 2 of Chapter 14 of this title emphasis  
 477 on improving student achievement and increasing high school graduation rates, with the  
 478 goal of having all public high schools in Georgia reach at least a 90 percent high school  
 479 completion rate, which shall include completion by the end of the summer following a  
 480 student's senior year, by July 1, 2020, with annual incremental targets.

481 20-2-329.1.

482 (a) An individual graduation plan shall be reviewed annually, and revised, if appropriate,  
 483 upon approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the  
 484 student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

485 (b) An individual graduation plan may be changed at any time throughout a student's high  
 486 school career upon approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with  
 487 guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

488 20-2-329.2.

489 The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out  
 490 the provisions of this part.

491 20-2-329.3.

492 It is the intent of the General Assembly that it is strongly discouraged that this part be  
 493 waived by the State Board of Education pursuant to Article 4 of this chapter, Code Section  
 494 20-2-244, or Code Section 20-2-2065."

495 **SECTION 11.**

496 Said title is further amended in Code Section 20-2-281, relating to assessment of  
 497 effectiveness of educational programs, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

498 "(q) The State Board of Education shall consider the passage by a student of an employer  
 499 or industry certification examination or a state licensure examination which is approved by  
 500 the State Board of Education when considering whether to grant such student a variance  
 501 for one or more portions of the high school graduation test required by the State Board of  
 502 Education pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section in order to obtain a Georgia high  
 503 school diploma; provided, however, that the state board shall not grant a variance to a  
 504 student unless the student has attempted and failed to pass the relevant portion of the high  
 505 school graduation test at least three times."

506 **SECTION 12.**

507 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
508 without such approval.

509 **SECTION 13.**

510 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.